Vanquishing the V/PD

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This publication is primarily directed towards airport management to be disseminated to all levels of personnel working at your airfield. It does not matter how large or how small your airfield or how tight your budget may be, this information must be made available to your people by whatever means. Vanquishing the V/PD can be accomplished through a solid partnership between the FAA and airport management. The responsibility of making sure that the proper safeguards are in place; however, lies squarely on the shoulders of the airport management. Please use this information and all that follows as a guide by which to produce a safer environment at your airfield.

There is a shared responsibility between vehicle operators and the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) to establish and maintain accurate communications. If the vehicle driver and the Tower blindly trust exchanged information and do not verify that information, the information exchange becomes inaccurate and runway incursions occur. I guess former President Ronald Reagan indirectly described the dynamics of movement area communications when he coined the phrase “Trust but verify”.
For instance, vehicle drivers must communicate accurate present locations to the tower and request realistic clearances. The tower, in turn, must verify (if possible) the true location of the vehicle by establishing visual contact and confirm that the vehicle can realistically proceed as requested. Trust but verify. Finally, when a vehicle driver receives a clearance from the tower that does not seem right, may not have been intended

for him/her or did not grant what was originally requested, he/she is expected to hold his/her position and question the clearance. Trust but verify.

At a major airport in the Western-Pacific Region an electrician called the tower and requested permission to cross Runway 26L at Taxiway "E". He was actually holding short of Runway 26R at "E". Please note that Taxiway "E" does not intersect Runway 26L (where the electrician claimed he was located). The tower (presumably) did not verify the vehicles position with a visual contact and cleared him onto Runway 08R from Taxiway "E" as the airport was operating in an east traffic configuration. This clearance was impossible as Taxiway "E" did not intersect Runway 26L/08R. So what do we have so far?

1. The vehicle driver gave the tower an incorrect (impossible) position.
2. The vehicle driver requested clearance onto the wrong runway.
3. The tower did not confirm the vehicles actual position and cleared him onto the requested runway from an intersection that did not intersect the requested runway.
4. To further confuse the issue, the tower used a reciprocal runway designation in his clearance to match the traffic flow.

Well, as you can guess by now, the electrician entered Runway 26R/08L from Taxiway "E" and a runway incursion resulted from all of the miscommunication. The vehicle driver did not enter the runway that he was cleared to enter but entered the runway he wished to enter. This is a perfect example of an exchange of information that went unverified by both parties and degenerated into a runway incursion. The moral to this story is "Trust but verify".

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